



ARKAN

Supporting Rule of Law Reform in the West Bank & Gaza

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Semi-Annual Progress Report

By:
The Arkan Project
Supporting Rule of Law Reform in the West Bank & Gaza

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ACRONYMS

CAS	Civic Action Strategies
CI	Chemonics International, Inc.
CLE	Continuing Legal Education
COP	Chief of Party
CRR	Curriculum Reform Review
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CTO	Cognizant Technical Officer
D&G	Democracy & Governance
GIS	Geographic Information System
IQC	Indefinite Quantity Contract
LOE	Level of Effort
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PA	Palestinian Authority
PBA	Palestinian Bar Association
PLC	Palestinian Legislative Council
PMU	Project Management Unit
PMP	Performance Management Plan
QPR	Quarterly Progress Report (ROL IQC)
RLAC	Rule of Law Advisory Committee
ROL	Rule of Law
SAPR	Semi-Annual Progress Report

SOW	Scope of Work
ST	Short-term
TO	Task Order
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAT	Value Added Tax

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Semi-Annual Progress Report (SAPR) for the Arkan project, Supporting Rule of Law Reform in the West Bank and Gaza, covers the period from October 1, 2004 through March 31, 2005. Arkan is a three year, \$3.9 million Task Order (TO) under the Rule of Law (ROL) IQC.

During this reporting period, the project team undertook and accomplished many important start-up goals, including the completion of staff hiring, establishing suitable offices in Ramallah and Gaza, and procuring necessary office equipment. From a programmatic point of view, the staff established partnership relations with Arkan's immediate partners: (i) law schools of four universities (Al Azhar, Bir Zeit, An Najah, and Al Quds); (ii) the Palestinian Bar Association (PBA); and (iii) a large number of civil society organizations working on rule of law reform in the West Bank and Gaza, as well as a number of Palestinians active in the rule of law field.

Major programmatic and administrative accomplishments:

- Project start-up completed
- Major stakeholder relationships firmly established
- Year one workplan developed in close partnership with USAID
- Legal reform dialogue initiated at all major law schools with an enthusiastic response
- Legal reform dialogue yields important legal education and legal profession reform suggestions
- Unique elections training and technical assistance provided

In sum, the project completed the time consuming, but necessary administrative matters essential to initiation of a new project. Project progress began with enthusiastic partner response. Based on the groundwork of these initial conversations, acceleration of project activities, according to partner input and USAID advice has been initiated, with plans for near term delivery of specific technical assistance underway.

The SAPR is divided into the following sections: Programmatic Accomplishments, Administrative Accomplishments, and the Financial Summary.

SECTION I

Programmatic Accomplishments

A. General Activities:

1. Rule of Law Advisory Committee

The Rule of Law Advisory Committee (RLAC) will serve as an advisory committee for the project. It was established in order to serve as the driving force behind project efforts to build momentum for positive changes in the Palestinian legal landscape. It consists of a number of highly respected individuals representing stakeholders and key partners. Serving as local reform champions who can assist in providing 'moral' support and backing for the project's objectives and activities, the RLAC will also employ their social and legal sector know-how to vet potential project strategies. The RLAC will assist in addressing any obstacles the project may face and in exploring various solutions.

Arkan staff met repeatedly to devise a vision statement for the RLAC and to discuss the composition of the committee, limits on the roles members will play in project operations, criteria for selecting those members, and a possible meeting schedule. The results of these meetings were shared with immediate counterparts in a memorandum. The Palestinian Bar Association (PBA) and the four main Palestinian law schools are supportive, as were other potential 'guest members'. The RLAC will meet once every several months (at most quarterly).

RLAC membership has been finalized and shared with the project Cognizant Technical Officer (CTO). Members are as follows:

#	Entity Represented	Representative, Position
1	Ministry of Justice	H.E. Farid Jallad, Minister of Justice
2	Supreme Judicial Council	Justice Zuheir Sourani, Chairman
3	Palestinian Bar Association (WB)	Mr. Hatem Abbas, Chairman, Board of Directors
4	Al Azhar Law School	Dr. Mustafa Ayyad, Dean
5	Bir Zeit Institute of Law	Dr. Samer Fares, Head, Legal Department
6	An Najah Law School	Dr. Ahmad Al Khaldi, Dean
7	Al Quds Law School	Dr. Musa Dweik, Dean

In addition to the above membership, guests representing the private/business sector, civil society and Palestinian Authority (PA) ministries will be invited to attend meetings of the RLAC, as subject matters dictate. We are currently sending invitations for the first RLAC meeting, scheduled for April 5, 2005.

2. Establishing Partner Relationships

During this reporting period, Arkan has worked to develop relationships with all stakeholders and partners to ensure the successful enfoldment of project objectives. Arkan held a project Inauguration Ceremony on February 2, 2005, taking place simultaneously in Ramallah and Gaza City with participation from a number of public figures having stake in rule of law (ROL) development. The event was spearheaded by then Minister of Justice, HE Nahed Al Rayyes, Mr. Jim Bever, USAID West Bank/Gaza Mission Director, Arkan subcontractor MASSAR Associates, judges, representatives of other donor organizations, representatives of other rule of law and democracy projects, deans of Palestinian law

schools, representatives of the PBA, and civil society members. The stakeholder meeting following the formal inauguration of the project served as a unique opportunity to present the main elements of the draft workplan to key individuals and institutions with stake in ROL reform. Participants provided invaluable comments and recommendations, which were taken into account as the team finalized the workplan for submission to USAID.

Arkan has worked to further formalize partner relationships through signing Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with three immediate partners: Al Azhar Law School, An Najah Law School, and Al Quds Law School. By the end of May 2005, Arkan expects to sign a similar MOU with the Bir Zeit Institute of Law.

On March 14, 2005, the PBA Board of Directors issued a resolution, by which it approved in principle, the formalization of its relationship with Arkan. The PBA has established a special committee, comprising the Chairman and two other West Bank members of its Board of Directors to negotiate with Arkan the terms of an MOU. The resolution constitutes an important benchmark for future cooperation between the PBA and Arkan. Once the MOU is final, the PBA and Arkan will set a date for an official signing ceremony, which we expect to take place before the end of May 2005, within weeks of the upcoming PBA Board of Directors elections.

B. Elections Related activities

1. Elections Objections and Appeals Monitoring Training

a. Request and Mobilization

In December 2004, USAID requested Arkan involvement in the legal aspect of the January 9, 2005, Palestinian presidential elections. Arkan responded to this need, developing an innovative training program to provide legal professionals with the knowledge and training necessary to have them act as monitors of any post-election legal challenge processes. The project mobilized rapidly, subcontracting to US-based Civic Action Strategies (CAS) to design and implement a “Legal Claims Resolution Monitoring” workshop for Palestinian lawyers. CAS international expert, Ted Jonas, conducted the training workshop on January 7, 2005 in Ramallah, with a video link to Gaza City. The training assisted the legal community in observing the legal election complaints process – including complaint filing, adjudication, and appeal of legal claims. Mr. Jonas also designed and developed election complaint process monitoring forms (or “checklists”), in conjunction with participants and Arkan staff.

Nineteen Palestinian lawyers participated in the training and contributed towards the development of the complaint process monitoring forms. On Election Day, the project team, along with Mr. Jonas, visited fifteen polling stations in Ramallah, Bir Zeit, and Jerusalem to monitor the submission of claims at polling stations and district offices. Annex A is a success story generated jointly by the Arkan and Tamkeen project teams, highlighting the achievements in civil society and rule of law reform stemming from the Presidential elections. It was displayed on Chemonics’ external website, www.chemonics.com, and distributed amongst colleagues in the home and field offices.

b. Results

The workshop has been hailed as a success, providing a unique service to the Palestinian legal community and general citizenry. Further, the training revealed serious problems with the legislative framework for Palestinian elections, inspired local interest in pursuing election claims advocacy and legal reform, and

provided information for USAID to factor into its consideration of further support for similar activities in the development of rule of law in the West Bank and Gaza.

Civic Action Strategies has prepared a report about the training process, its findings, and recommendations for future interventions in support of election claims monitoring. The report has been submitted to USAID for review. Among the recommendations stemming from the training, are suggestions for supporting a legal advisory and educational or advocacy program to address problems in Palestinian election laws.

Arkan is also preparing a brief report on the usefulness of the training. Preliminary feedback received from participants indicated the monitoring claims forms/checklists were indeed beneficial and in fact, used by a number of participants as they monitored the resolution of claims submitted in relation to the January 9th elections. Feedback from two follow-up meetings with participants in the West Bank and Gaza, coupled with the recommendations of the CAS Report, will form the basis for further election-related activities that Arkan is currently exploring.

C. Component 1: Enhancing Law Faculty Contributions to Legal Reform

1. Establishing Practical Skills Training and Improving Course Offerings

Palestinian lawyers need practical skills to bring real change to their communities. To this end, Arkan aims to work with Palestinian legal educational institutions to introduce modern interactive teaching methodologies, initiate curricula reform, inspire the formation of student and faculty associations and provide legal materials resources.

Arkan is working with Al Azhar, An Najah, Al Quds and Bir Zeit law schools in order to form a common understanding of the current status, deficiencies and recommendations for change with respect to their curricula. Introductory meetings were held with the deans of these four law schools to introduce the general goals and objectives of the ROL project, the parameters of assistance, and discuss methods of mutual cooperation. Participants in these meetings included:

- Dr. Ahmed Khalidi, Dean of An Najah University Law School
- Mudar Kassis, Dean of the Law School and Director of the Institute of Law, Bir Zeit University
- Dr. Mossa Dweik, Dean of the Law School at Al Quds University
- Dr. Mussa Abu Mallouh, Dean of the Al Azhar University School of Law

The law school leaders were enthusiastic for anticipated project activities and promised cooperation. Building upon such positive feedback, an initial Curriculum Reform Review (CRR) of existing curricula documents was conducted. Project staff have since initiated dialogue focusing on course offerings and improving teaching methodologies used under the current system. Several suggestions have been made to add new subjects to law schools curricula, including legal writing, intellectual property rights, and legal ethics. Bir Zeit Institute of Law has indicated earlier that due to the fact that its curricula is less than a year old, it plans to introduce no changes to the existing, new curricula until it has been used for at least a year.

To date, as is noted above, significant progress has been made. Arkan is currently drafting a report summarizing discussions with partner schools and project findings. The report includes recommendations for the reform of the curricula and teaching methodologies used at the four partner law schools, with a

view to identifying specific areas where practical skills training and comparative legal analysis can be incorporated into the existing curricula.

As is the case with the development of action plans, the use of case studies in the teaching of law is not common practice in Palestinian law schools. Arkan has discussed the desirability and demand for the introduction of this teaching methodology. It is clear there is enough support for it, though it is not clear how much faculty know about this teaching method and whether they are aware of the skills they need to develop and time they need to dedicate to working with their students in order for the introduction of this teaching methodology to be successful.

Next Steps:

- The results of the CRR needs assessment, project findings, and recommendations, included in the draft report, will be shared with deans and faculty of partner law schools.
- Feedback will be solicited from partner organizations and targeted plans to introduce interactive teaching methodologies for each law school will be developed.
- Arkan is working with faculty, deans, and students of Bir Zeit and Al Quds Universities to identify students willing to assist in developing targeted action plans for their respective institutions (pilot groups of students have already been identified for An Najah and Al Azhar Universities)

Arkan will be bringing a ST Legal Education Specialist to the field in April 2005, to facilitate the introduction of interactive teaching methodologies to faculties and the development of targeted action plans for each law school. The Legal Education Specialist will also work with faculty of the four partner law schools and their students on developing individual action plans for students, their respective benefits for faculty and students, and the role of both students and faculty in this initiative. Arkan has shared this SOW with law school deans and faculty—there is unequivocal support for introducing this new undertaking.

2. Engaging Law Students in Educational Outcomes and Preparation for Practice

Legal education is most successful in creating high-quality, skilled, ethical attorneys when students are actively involved in the educational process. Their constructive criticism, ingenuity, and organizational energy can and should be harnessed to improve the Palestinian legal education experience for all.

With this in mind, and in coordination with deans and faculty, Arkan has met with a large number of law students from the four universities. Students were intrigued by the idea of student input into curriculum development and expressed their readiness to cooperate.

a. Student curriculum reform review survey

Arkan has continued working to survey students regarding curriculum reform in the four partner law schools. The survey will contribute towards setting priorities for project involvement in the legal education agenda. The project plans to solicit student opinions on how their educational experience could be improved, ensuring that the project is as responsive to their needs as possible. In addition, the survey will collect vital baseline data for project performance management planning.

To that end, Arkan developed a student survey concept paper and conducted meetings with institutions and individuals specialized in carrying out survey research. The project is developing a Scope of Work (SOW) for a ST local survey specialist that will result in providing the project and partner law schools with the data necessary for further project activities.

In order for Arkan to ensure the consultancy provides the best results possible, a home office Communications Specialist arrived on March 28th to work on the development of the project's communication plan and liaise with the local consultant who will later be responsible for carrying out the survey.

b. Develop student associations at law schools where students demonstrate interest

A cornerstone for engaging students in educational reform and preparing them for future practice is the development of student associations. Arkan has received numerous signs of support from faculty and students alike on this project initiative:

- An Najah University is providing office space for use by the faculty, and clear statements of support from the dean.
- Students at An Najah already have plans for forming a student association focused on ROL development and another focused on faculty development. These students are currently working with the university to develop regulations and procedures to govern their formation and operations.
- The project team met on January 13, 2005, with first-year law students at Bir Zeit Law School to discuss the idea of establishing student associations. Students expressed their interest to participate and some volunteered to put their points of view in writing, their needs and ambitions, and a rule of law agenda for the post-election period.
- On March 27, 2005, the Arkan team met with the law students' pilot group of Al Azhar University. Students have decided to form three groups, each with envisioned roles, as a first step towards the creation of three student associations.
 - Communication and Community Training: Organize communication with law students from other universities, and communicate with governmental and non-governmental institutions.
 - Internal relations: Communicate with the students' council, the faculty council and the university board on behalf of the law students.
 - Cultural Association: Follow up with social, political and sporting events, issue a student electronic journal, help students engage in legal research and publish legal materials, and coordinating participation in any future moot court competition.

Arkan will assess the various needs of each law school and develop a plan in response to these demands, contingent upon agreement of the activities associations might be engaged in, including the development and publishing of an electronic legal journal.

c. Students indicate their demands from the new Palestinian leadership

As part of Arkan's efforts to develop student associations at law schools where students can demonstrate interest and take part in rule of law reform efforts, the Arkan team has conducted seven workshops with law students of Bir Zeit, An Najah, Al Quds and Al Azhar universities. ROL related expectations and demands of the new Palestinian leadership were discussed and subsequently developed into a list. The list includes key ROL action items, including ensuring separation of powers, independence of the judiciary, improved legal education, the need for providing legal awareness to the public and law enforcement

official, to name but a few. To galvanize support for this initiative, and ensure the final list of demands accurately represents the views of students at the four law schools, a second set of meetings with students is currently underway. During a recent visit to An Najah University, Arkan staff shared the complete list of demands with law students and the feedback received was quite positive. The list will be shared with students of the three remaining partner law schools in the coming weeks.

The commitment to ROL reform students have expressed is evident from the enthusiasm with which this exercise has been received. It is promising and likely to be a valuable asset on which the success of many of the project's activities can depend.

Next steps:

- Students will be asked to confirm support for and accuracy of the list
- Arkan is developing an action plan for taking these demands/expectations to the relevant Palestinian authorities, including the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) and possibly even the office of the President
- Propose publicizing the demands to solicit public and civil society support

3. Providing Legal Reference Materials and Development Assistance

a. Grants

The project includes a grants-making element, which will likely begin during the latter portion of the first year of the project. Arkan grants will be limited to meeting the needs and supporting the initiatives of law students, faculty, and schools, as well as civil society organizations (CSOs) active in the ROL sector, including the PBA. The project has drafted a grants manual based on applicable USAID regulations, which it is currently reviewing. The manual will govern Arkan's grants-making and management. Once revision and internal review is completed, the manual will be submitted to USAID for approval. Although the first meeting of the Arkan Grants Committee is not expected before the end of the project's first year, the project plans to issue its first grants solicitation by the end of the coming quarter. By then, Arkan will also have finalized and announced the formation of its Grants Committee.

b. Develop a timeline for incorporating each materials list into curriculum

Grants will be key in providing materials needed by law schools. Arkan is in possession of lists of materials needed by each law school and as each no doubt has different needs, Arkan will develop plans for each school sensitive to their particular demands and situations. Project staff are working to encourage law schools to think of material needs not as ends in themselves, but as a means to support curricula reform. The Project has faced several difficulties in this regard. For example, there is continuing demand for providing each law school with equipment and furniture for moot court competitions, without first introducing and training faculty in this teaching methodology.

The project will further develop a timeline for incorporating each materials list into the curriculum. This activity comes as culmination of both the CRR needs assessment and the identification of materials, including reference and library materials, needed for each law school. Incorporation of material needs in the plans developed for each law school is a continuing process.

Next steps:

- Arkan is eagerly anticipating the arrival of a ST Law Librarian in late May 2005, as this consultant will be discussing these lists and needs with each law school, and developing a separate plan for each partner law school for meeting said needs.

D. Component 2: Building Public and Professional Constituencies for Reform

1. Building Demand for a CLE Program at the PBA

During this reporting period several meetings were held with PBA Board members, including its President. The goal of these meetings was to introduce the project, discuss and learn more about the needs of the PBA and their current projects, explore ways to collaborate and cooperate, and to gain support for the establishment of the Rule of Law Advisory Committee. These meetings were very constructive, useful, and informative.

One key initiative of the PBA is the creation of a “Bar Training Institute,” which will comprise a PBA Continuing Legal Education (CLE) program. The PBA Board held a special meeting on March 14, 2005 to discuss cooperation with Arkan, resulting in the adoption of a resolution in which the Bar officially endorsed Arkan project activities in support of the PBA and the legal profession.

Next steps:

- Discussions with PBA liaisons regarding logistical issues related to implementation, surveying currently practicing attorneys regarding the design of the CLE program, and garnering support for a CLE program – including a planning session.
- The PBA anticipates forming a project implementation unit, a CLE committee of sorts, to work directly with Arkan. The CLE committee will be established following the PBA elections, scheduled for April 2, 2005.
- Arkan anticipates a ST Continuing Legal Education Specialist to travel to the field this April/May 2005 to conduct a needs assessment and encourage dialogue among legal professionals. The consultancy is expected to include suggestions for CLE program development, enhancing practical skills training in legal education, and an examination of issues of immediate importance to practicing attorneys

2. Identifying Local Professionals and Organizations to Contribute towards Dialogue on Promoting and an Independent/Effective Judiciary

Arkan staff conducted meetings with eighteen CSOs to learn about their current programs and discuss ways to coordinate and cooperate. Nearly all CSOs the project staff met with expressed strong support for the project. One participant, Iyad Barghouti, from the Ramallah Center for Human Rights Studies, commented, “I foresee many opportunities for cooperation, especially since there are many cross-cutting issues of the project that can compliment the objectives of the center”.

In addition to structured meetings, the project’s Gaza and Ramallah offices have witnessed an increasing number of visits by Palestinians, including students, NGO representatives, and lawyers with interest or desired involvement in the rule of law sector. Such increased visits indicate a growing interest in and support for rule of law reform. Further, they are evidence that Arkan has established itself as a key player in supporting rule of law reform. Such notoriety is crucial to the success of the project and its initiatives. As a result of formal meetings organized by the project and informal visits, Arkan has received a number of unsolicited proposals from NGOs active in the ROL field. Arkan is studying these proposals, to see

what aspects of the suggested activities we may be able to support as the project begins the grants-making process. The project continues to utilize these visits as opportunities for cementing the project's relations with the community; ensuring project activities are responsive to Palestinian demands, and implementing activities, to the extent possible, in collaboration with such active, local groups.

3. Supporting Alliances to Promote an Independent and Effective Judiciary

In this reporting period Arkan has identified, contacted, engaged with and begun providing support to alliances to promote an independent/effective judiciary and the rule of law in the West Bank and Gaza. The first such activity was the elections appeals training, reported under election-related activities. Another recent activity, related to building code violations, merits detail. Arkan is also currently exploring possible means through which the project can provide support to the recently established Justice Development Steering Committee. Arkan is also in discussions with the Palestinian Judges Association, regarding possible assistance the project may be able to provide.

a. Building code violations seminar:

On March 21, 2005 Arkan staff in Gaza organized a workshop on violations of the building code currently enforced in the Gaza Strip. Building code violations in the Gaza Strip have become a serious problem, having irreversible effects on various aspects of Palestinian life (social, economic, environmental) and on society's views towards respect for rule of law.

The seminar boasted 24 participants representing a wide-range of Palestinian sectors. Participants and Arkan staff discussed the magnitude and reasons of the problem, developing an action plan and a set of recommendations to deal with this phenomenon. A steering committee was established with members representing such groups as the PBA, Gaza Municipality, Environmental Protection Department, and the Union of People with Disabilities Recommendations will be shared with participants for their review and then distributed to concerned parties, including the PLC, Prime Minister, head of the PA Police Force, and the Association of Local Councils in the Gaza Strip.

Participants asked Arkan to provide funds for conducting a town hall meeting to allow more participation from the public and guarantee mass media coverage of the event. Arkan will consider the request in the context of activities planned for the coming quarter.

b. Justice Development Steering Committee

The President of the PA has recently issued a resolution creating a Justice Development Steering Committee. The resolution includes a mandate for resolving a chronic dispute over powers and responsibilities between the Ministry of Justice and the Supreme Judicial Council. The Committee has approached Arkan with a request to assist it in starting its work. Arkan is looking into providing with technical assistance, through a ST Legal Systems Dialogue Specialist, coming to Ramallah in May.

The consultant will also work with other stakeholders on starting (and sustaining) a conversation on legal sector reform.

SECTION II

Administrative Accomplishments

A. Project Start-Up

During this reporting period, close collaboration between the home and field offices resulted in the achievement of several milestones for start-up, including finding office space. Arkan subcontractor, MASSAR Associates, provided temporary office space to host staff in both the West Bank and Gaza until a permanent office could be leased. In the West Bank, space has been leased in Ramallah on Al-Irsal Street and occupied on January 1, 2005. Securing an appropriate office in Gaza has proven to be more difficult. After a thorough process, an appropriate office in Gaza was finally located and occupied on February 15, 2005.

Within three weeks of award, two Chemonics home office Project Management Unit members, Mr. Greg Gisvold, and Ms. Rebecca Talaga, traveled to the West Bank. Arkan conducted meetings MASSAR and USAID Mission staff in Tel Aviv. USAID meeting participants included the project's CTO, Mission Director, Deputy Director, Democracy & Governance Office Director, and representatives from the Program Office, Office of Contracts Management, and the Office of the Controller. The meeting with USAID dealt with a variety of matters, including logistical and regulatory issues such as financial requirements, reporting requirements, conflicts of interest, marketing requirements, and approval channels, while also serving as an important tool in ensuring a smooth and successful start-up.

Meetings with MASSAR and USAID established a base for building a strong team that and good relations for working collaboratively to effectively support and promote project goals.

In coordination with the CTO, project staff agreed to a number of improvements and additions to the required reporting as outlined in the contract. These include a weekly update to the CTO which includes developments during a given week and planned activities of the next week. Additionally, the first quarterly report required by the IQC has been submitted to the CTO, in addition to this Semi-Annual Progress Report, required in the Task Order.

Upon contract award, a full-scale recruit was conducted for unfilled local support positions. Through the subcontractor, positions were advertised in local newspapers. After an initial review of the candidates, including preliminary interviews, the top three candidates for each position were interviewed by senior project staff. All support staff received USAID approval and are in place and contributing to the on-going project start-up and implementation. Performance evaluations were conducted for all support staff, upon completion of the three month probation period. A personal development plan for each team member was developed and agreed upon for performance improvement.

1. Procurement of Office Goods

By the end of March 2005, the Administration and Finance team has succeeded in procuring and installing all services, equipment and furnishings necessary for smooth project operations in both Ramallah and Gaza offices. Office furniture, computers, printers and other office equipment have been successfully and cost-effectively procured in accordance with USAID regulations. A project vehicle has been leased for use in Ramallah. As the transportation needs are not as great in Gaza, the office will not be leasing a vehicle for long-term use. The project is currently exploring various companies and offers

through which to purchase videoconferencing equipment, in order to further streamline communications between the Ramallah and Gaza offices.

2. Start-up Workshops

On the days before and after the Inauguration Ceremony, home office staff took the lead in conducting team-building activities and trainings on a variety of matters related to USAID project implementation. The project's CTO took part in a number of these activities, contributing to ensuring that all involved parties are on the same page.

The CTO introduced the project team to USAID objectives for Arkan in the context of USAID's overall strategic objectives; provided USAID's perspective on important implementation issues, such as communications; provided an overview of the Mission's management priorities, and discussed issues related to reporting, performance management, financial management, and donor coordination.

Home office staff presented on Chemonics core values, history, corporate culture, organizational structure, roles and responsibilities of both home office and field office teams, and systems and procedures for project management. In addition, Arkan staff participated in team-building exercises and problem solving scenarios. Discussions also included a review of the ROL IQC and the Task Order, highlighting technical, financial and reporting aspects of the same.

Home office staff presented the idea of developing a Performance Management Plan (PMP) in order to set benchmarks by which to evaluate project achievements. Arkan staff participated in a brainstorming session, working to identify possible indicators for each TO component. To further develop the PMP, a home office PMP Specialist will continue this dialogue in the field in early April 2005. In consultation with the USAID West Bank/Gaza Mission, D&G Office PMP Specialist, and project CTO a finalized PMP for Arkan will be developed.

The development of the Arkan Communications Strategy began during COP Orientation and continued throughout the start-up workshop in the field in early February. It is presently being supported and carried forward through the efforts of a home office Communications Specialist currently in the field. Our specialist is working hand in hand with the Arkan field team in drafting a solid strategy, including incorporating the necessary action steps. The specialist is simultaneously soliciting and incorporating feedback from USAID and key stakeholders, as needed, with an eye towards refinement and finalization.

3. Project Name: Arkan

As shown in this report, project staff have decided to choose an easy-to-use Arabic name for the project, which will be added to the end of the official name of the task order. The team decided to add the Arabic word "Arkan", which means "pillars/foundations" indicating the "pillars/foundations" of rule of law in West Bank and Gaza. We are currently working on a project logo, and registering a project domain name (www.arkan.org).

B. Chief of Party Orientation

The home office PMU designed and developed a program for a three-day COP Orientation visit to home office. The orientation is standard procedure for all Chemonics projects and includes meetings with support and project staff, workplanning sessions, discussions of pertinent issues, and general project planning. These sets of meetings and discussions serve to better inform the COP of the structures and resources available at the home office, which may be able to benefit the project, ensure the quality of

deliverables, and establish methods of meeting client expectations and contract requirements. The orientation was originally scheduled for December; however, due to the death of President Arafat, and a delay in the processing and issuance of a US visa, the COP orientation was delayed, and took place in mid-January instead.

The three days of meetings, presentations and exercises covers procurement, communications, branding requirements, home office—field office coordination and support, USAID project financial management, Chemonics standards of business conduct, workplanning, reporting requirements and style, project IT requirements, and the like. During the visit, the COP gave a presentation about the project at the weekly Senior Vice President's meeting, and met with USAID ROL IQC CTO and staff, also briefing them on the project's start-up progress and successes to date.

C. Field Accountant

On January 9, 2005 a Field Accountant from the home office visited the project to install accounting software. The Field Accountant also trained the Finance and Administrative Manager on the accounting software as well as Chemonics accounting procedures and policies. The Field Accountant also delivered a presentation on Chemonics Standards of Business Conduct, held on January 13, 2005.

D. Workplan: Year One

Arkan's workplan was developed through a long, collaborative process, designed to guarantee buy-in from stakeholders and a commitment to success from the project team. Arkan staff engaged in several brainstorming sessions, and one-on-one and group discussions with stakeholders. Once drafts were developed and the COP and home office PMU consulted jointly, ensuring that the understanding of the project's various activities was the same on both ends. Group discussions of the draft workplan took place during the first stakeholder meeting, which followed the project's formal inauguration, on February 2, 2005. The workplan was modified in response to stakeholder comments and submitted to the CTO on March 22, 2005. The CTO requested clarification on a number of issues and thus the revised version of the workplan is currently under consideration.

E. Project Policy and Operations Manual

All Chemonics projects develop policy and operations manuals based on Chemonics corporate policies and home office procedures. As each manual is catered to the needs of each project office, great efforts have been invested in drafting and reviewing the Arkan project manual. The manual contains information on personnel matters, accepted and expected conduct, work ethics, including conflict of interest matters, use of USAID and project property, and other matters designed to ensure compliance with USAID and company regulations as well as local laws.

To ensure its provisions complied with the Palestinian labor law, a draft of the manual was reviewed by a local lawyer. The manual, which has been approved, has been shared with staff, and each has been asked to read, understand and confirm compliance.

F. Arkan and the USAID GIS System

Arkan has sent to USAID WBG Mission's Management Information Systems Specialist, a complete list of activities and units of measurement that will be used in feeding the Mission's GIS system with data on project activities. We are waiting for the username and password to start uploading information in the

system. Arkan is hopeful that we would be amongst the first in the D&G sector to begin full use of the system, including in deciding localities, in which to carry out activities.

Two Arkan team members received initial training on how to upload project related information and activities on the GIS. The Mission will provide further training all team members during April 2005.

SECTION III

Financial Summary

A. General Expenditure Summary

Authorized Expenditure	Actual Expenditure	Balance	LOE Expended	LOE Remaining	Estimated Completion Date
\$3,975,259	\$291,984	\$3,683,274	749.79	1,433.21	October 2007

B. Registration and VAT

The zero percent VAT exemption status letter, the PA Directorate of Customs and Indirect Taxes, Ministry of Finance issues, was received on December 15, 2005. Prior to that, Arkan has received the Project's registration certificates from the PA Ministry of the National Economy, issued on December 11, 2005. This has positioned the project to become compliant with USAID guidance on the 'avoidance' of payment of VAT.

The Project has also registered with the PA department of Income Tax, thus successfully completing PA registration and regulatory requirements, and positioning the Project to income tax deductions to the PA, in full compliance with the applicable laws.



SUCCESS STORY

Monitors Fan Out to Ensure Vote

Election monitors and post-election legal specialists team up for Palestinian vote



Photo by Tamkeen

Majida Awashreh, a Tamkeen civil society specialist, completes an “observing the observer” form at a polling station in Ramallah.

“As a Palestinian, these elections are very important to me. We proved to ourselves and to the world that we have a democratic system and that we can make our choice in a peaceful, orderly way.”

In a milestone for democracy and civil society, domestic election observers fanned out across 1,000-plus voting centers in the Palestinian areas in December and January to monitor the first municipal and presidential elections in years. Meanwhile, post-election legal specialists began preparing for possible challenges like those seen in the Ukraine and United States.

“The few problems I’ve witnessed were resolved quickly,” said Khalid Nassif of the Civic Forum Institute, one of more than 60 organizations that received training from the USAID-funded Civil Society and Democracy Strengthening project. The project is better known as Tamkeen, an Arabic word meaning empowerment.

Following the death of Palestinian Authority president Yasser Arafat on Nov. 11, Tamkeen quickly mobilized grants and sponsored a series of training programs designed to build the capacity of civil society organizations to organize and manage election monitors. Election observers like Nassif helped Tamkeen train civil society leaders how to manage an election observation campaign, covering topics ranging from the basics of the election process to the specifics of what to observe inside and outside the polling stations. Participants then passed on their knowledge to hundreds of non-partisan volunteers from grassroots organizations and universities.

During the run-up to local elections on Dec. 23 and presidential elections on Jan. 9, Tamkeen election specialists trained 118 representatives from more than 60 local organizations how to observe, record and report. The organizations deployed some 1,000 domestic observers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Grantees also staged community events such as town hall meetings to help increase citizen understanding of candidate positions and issues.

“For many participants, this is the first time they take part in elections, not only as observers but also as voters,” said Aref Jaffal, head of the Civic Forum Institute, a Tamkeen partner.

Some observers monitored the local elections of Dec. 23 – where women captured 51 local seats – to

ANNEX A.

prepare for Jan. 9.

"I learned many things from [the Dec. 23 elections] that I've incorporated into the training I deliver to election observers," said Nassif.

On Jan. 9, Nassif began his day at 5:30 a.m. when he met with a team of observers to finalize decisions on which stations to monitor. Once the stations opened, he spent anywhere from 30 to 60 minutes at various locations in the West Bank. As coordinator, he also stepped in to resolve problems, juggling two cellular phones that rang every few minutes.

While election monitors made their rounds, Tamkeen deployed its own team of civil society specialists across the West Bank and Gaza Strip to observe the observers. Project staff completed forms capturing what they saw and are now compiling the results.

"As a Palestinian, these elections are very important to me," said Nassif. "We proved to ourselves and to the world that we have a democratic system and that we can make our choice in a peaceful, orderly way."

Although some irregularities were reported – such as names missing from voters' lists and illegal campaigning at polling stations – both domestic and international observers generally gave the process high marks, according to a preliminary election report by Tamkeen.

Possibly the most severe problems were reported from Jerusalem, where Israeli authorities managing checkpoints turned away some Palestinian voters and observers alike, according to Tamkeen-trained observer Khaled Abu Alya. Alya classified the presence of authorities as "intimidating," also saying unclear voting procedures and incomplete voter registration lists caused further problems.

In 1996, Arafat was voted head of the Palestinian National Authority in the first and only national elections. The last municipal elections came in 1976. Palestinians will again cast ballots for members of the Palestinian Legislative Council and municipal leaders in the summer.

"This day gives me hope for the future of Palestine," said 25-year-old Ahmad Al-Azzeh, who volunteered as a non-partisan election observer. "There is no way to know that the election is free and fair unless you see it for yourself."

Azzeh was trained by Tamkeen on how to mount voter registration and election observation campaigns. Wanting to do more, he then trained and led a team of nine observers deployed at three polling stations across Bethlehem. They took notes, asked questions of voters and those administering the vote, and worked late into the night to ensure proper procedures.

The Arab Thought Forum, a Tamkeen partner, estimates that only 30 percent of all election monitors were trained, indicating the need for more training ahead of the next elections.

Azzeh also worked alongside observers sent by the political candidates. Once ballots were counted, both partisan and neutral observers were asked to sign off on the final results, essentially agreeing that there was no wrongdoing or fraud. Should an entity submit a formal, legal challenge regarding the validity of the vote, that's when election appeals monitors trained by the USAID-funded Supporting Rule of Law Reform project will play an instrumental role in the legal process that decides the outcome of challenges.

Within a matter of two weeks, the ROL project prepared training material, selected the participants, contracted with trainers, delivered the training to 18 Palestinian lawyers from Gaza and the West Bank, and produced election appeals monitoring checklists. The checklists are then used by monitors like the Gaza-based Palestinian Association for Legal Sciences to monitor election appeals proceedings.

Because the ROL project was implemented just months before the elections, Tamkeen was able to assist with logistics, provided office space and videoconference equipment, and supplied a trainer from among its civil society specialists.

Currently, citizens, organizations and some observers, like 23-year-old Mu'taz Abu-Eljedian, have filed 44 legal challenges associated with the presidential election.

Eljedian volunteered as an election observer after getting trained by a Tamkeen-supported NGO. On the Jan. 9 election day, he put an end to illegal campaigning at a polling station in Gaza when he noticed people chasing voters to influence their decisions.

"I learned from the election observation training conducted by Tamkeen that campaigning on election day is illegal, and that I have the right to file a complaint with the polling station manager," said Eljedian, who immediately filed a complaint.